

# Neighborhood Grapevine

City of Milwaukee's

Department of Neighborhood Services

Tom Barrett-Mayor

Art Dahlberg-Commissioner



New DNS Commissioner Art Dahlberg (left) with City Clerk Ron Leonhardt just before taking his oath in the Common Council Chambers.

## ***New DNS Commissioner Sworn in***

On March 2, 2009 Art Dahlberg was sworn in as commissioner for the City of Milwaukee's Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS). Art replaces former Commissioner Martin G. Collins, who retired after 27 years with the City.

As Commissioner of DNS he oversees a wide variety of programs ranging from landlord training, construction inspections, fire prevention inspections, zoning inspections, residential and commercial code enforcement, and nuisance abatement to dangerous animal investigation.

Mr. Dahlberg has a degree in engineering from Kansas State University as well as 24 years of experience in the interpretation and enforcement of building, housing and fire codes. In his career he has been a building inspector, fire protection inspector, fire prevention inspector, a plan reviewer, a fire investigator, a member of a collapse response team as well as a building official/fire official for three communities in Virginia. He has been involved in the development of codes at the national level as well as the development

**See New Commissioner page 8**



Mayor Tom Barrett, Council President Wille Hines, Gail Leone, Vice President of Harley-Davidson, Art Dahlberg, Commissioner of DNS, and Margaret Weimer, Select Milwaukee speak at Foreclosure Prevention news conference.

## ***DNS Launches APIF Program***

The foreclosure problem in Milwaukee has triggered a new program to help limit its negative effect on Milwaukee's neighborhoods. One key step is to identify responsible parties for the property during the foreclosure process.

To that end, the City has created a new Abandoned Property In Foreclosure program (APIF). The ordinance requires that filers of a foreclosure claim inspect the property within 30 days of the court filing. They need to determine if the property has been abandoned. If not, they need to monitor it every 30 days to see if it goes abandoned. If the property becomes abandoned, that triggers a second requirement that they register the property with DNS. That registration tracks whom to contact in the event of property maintenance issues. It also requires exterior maintenance of the property during the foreclosure process, such as snow removal, grass cutting and litter removal, etc.

**See New APIF program page 2**

## New APIF Program from page 1

The intent of this ordinance is to:

- Reduce and prevent neighborhood blight
- Correct conditions that threaten the health, safety and welfare of the public
- Promote neighborhood stability and residential owner occupancy by preserving the condition and appearance of residential properties.
- Maintain residential property values and assessments.

DNS gets lists of all lis pendens (lien pending) filings for Milwaukee. That typically is the first step in a foreclosure case. The department in May 2009 sent out 4,600 informational letters to lenders and mortgagees about the ordinance requirements. The graph below shows the details of that mailing. Within the last year the department created 64,822 violation letters for various code violations.

The citizens of Milwaukee have a key role in helping to limit the harm from foreclosed properties. As Commissioner Dahlberg said, "We are depending on the public to be our eyes and ears to monitor the properties on their block. If they see mail piling up, grass uncut, unsecured doors or windows, we want to know about it. Call DNS Customer Service at 286-2268 and we will investigate the problem." Open homes are a magnet for criminal activity. Arson is a real risk and people need to be aware of what's happening around them.

The City of Milwaukee has a number of resources to help homeowners avoid foreclosure in the first place.

Homeownership Preservation Foundation (HPF): 1-888-995-HOPE) provides FREE counseling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in English and Spanish. Counselors will link callers as appropriate with their lender or a local NeighborWorks organization.

The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 provided the City of Milwaukee with \$9.2 million in federal funding for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to address foreclosed properties in Milwaukee neighborhoods impacted by the foreclosure crisis. For more information on the NSP program e-mail them at [nspinfo@milwaukee.gov](mailto:nspinfo@milwaukee.gov).

More info is on the City's web site at: <http://www.mkedcd.org/MilwaukeeStrong/index.html> 🐾

### APIF At a Glance

May-June 2009

Advisories Mailed	Inspections Made	Orders Issued
5,502	993	307

## Photo Violation Test



### How Many Violations Do You See? Who Would You Call to Get Them Corrected?

Starting with the obvious, I hope you caught the stairway to heaven. All that remains of the former porch is a box frame which might be considered an approved area of rescue only if you were a bird perched on a 2 x 12. DNS would write an order to repair the porch. The owner should have secured the exit in the meantime since this is a single family home.

Next you might have noticed the Jeep doing a bit of 4x4 off roading by driving up the alley curb to avoid a parking citation. DNS Nuisance Section will write an order to stop parking on unpaved surfaces. Call 286-2268 for that. While you on the phone, mention the unlicensed vehicle parked for more than 30 days. It won't qualify for an immediate tow, but it could trigger a reinspection fee if left unmoved.

Look in the background and you will see a mattress and a stuffed chair. Such items are not allowed outside as they become homes for mice and other vectors. What's a vector? A vector is anything capable of transmitting or passing on a disease or infestation. DNS Nuisance Section is the place to call...286-2268. See the discarded anti-freeze bottle. If there is other scattered litter around call DNS Nuisance Section for litter and garbage debris on private property. DPW handles littered public places 286-8282.

The cracked and spalled concrete might be citable violation. Certainly if the property was to be sold it would be counted as a defective item on an inspection report.

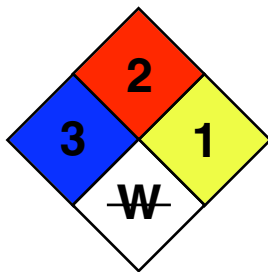
Since this was taken from the alley, and the garage is missing, the required house numbers are no longer visible, which is another violation. Fire and police depend on those numbers to rapidly locate trouble in cases of an emergency. Call DNS to report no rear house numbers, 286-2268.

Finally, judging from the rear wheel of the Jeep the grass is a foot tall. Call Dept. of Public Works Sanitation 286-8282 and they will cut it and send the bill to the owner if they take no action. 🐾



# Hazardous Occupancies: What Are They? And Why Are They Important?

By Douglas Krimmer  
Supervisor Commercial Section



Before the International Building Code was adopted by the State of Wisconsin effective July 2002 the State Building Code had an occupancy classification for Hazardous Occupancy, but the only types of buildings that were in that classification were repair and storage garages for vehicles.

The State has regulated flammable and combustible liquids and explosives since the beginning of codes, but other hazardous chemicals and substances were not. With the adoption of the IBC the garages were put in the Storage occupancy classification and a new Hazardous Occupancy classification was set up. The new "H" occupancy identifies and defines eighteen materials as hazardous and sets maximum allowable quantity limits that, when exceeded, put the building into an H classification. DNS now has a better code to regulate the Amount, Type, and Location of dangerous materials.

The H occupancy is further broken down into H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 based on the level of hazard with H1 being the most dangerous. The H occupancy now regulates such materials as oxidizers, corrosives, toxics, water reactives, flammable solids and even combustible fibers such as straw, hay, and waste paper. The code addresses building design and construction along with the use, maintenance and operation for not only the storage of these materials, but also for the processes that they are involved in.

A Hazardous Material Task Force has been formed that includes members of DNS along with DCD, Board of Zoning Appeals and the Milwaukee Fire Department to discuss the special problems related to H occupancies.

At the plan review level for new and altered buildings new permit applications are being developed to obtain more detailed information as to what, where and how much of these materials are in the building and how are they being stored and used. The better the description of the plan of operation, the fewer regulatory surprises at a later date.

The next level is inspection and the group is looking at having a Commercial Code Enforcement Inspector accompany the Construction Inspector at the final occupancy inspection to "hand-off" the building and point out any special areas of concern that came up during the construction or alteration.

This would also be a good time for the Code Enforcement Inspector to let the building owner know about the testing and maintenance requirements that will be checked during the annual fire prevention inspections. The group is also working on a method of getting the important information about the occupancies to the Milwaukee Fire Department by developing a new form of communication or including MFD in the final occupancy inspection.

The reason that this is so important starts with the same reason the codes exist, to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and employees in Milwaukee. The heightened

awareness for this particular occupancy is the fact that these materials are so volatile and can cause such great physical harm in a very short period of time that extra attention must be paid to the details to avoid a catastrophic event.

Many times the safety rules in these occupancies are relaxed because the workers start to feel too comfortable with the hazards around them and feel that since nothing bad has happened for a long time it's not a big deal to handle this stuff.

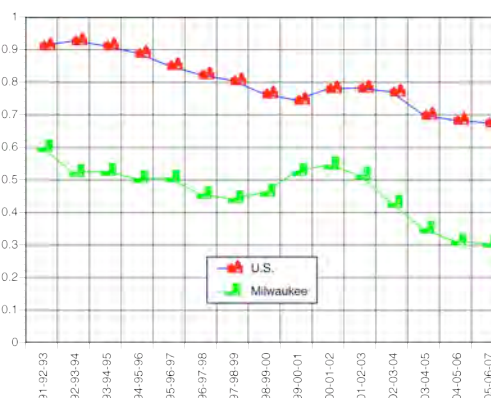
That's usually when something bad does happen. On February 7, 2008 there was an explosion at the Imperial Sugar Company in Savannah, GA and 14 people were killed; June 9, 2009 an explosion at a Slim Jim factory run by ConAgra Foods in Garner, NC killed two people and sent twenty to the hospital and then there is our most recent local event December 7, 2006 of a propane explosion at the Falk Corporation that killed three people and sent 46 to the hospital.

Although each event is unique in its cause and effect, the one thing they all have in common is after the investigations were completed they all were caused by some form of negligence or neglect. As "first preventers" if we diligently do our part of the puzzle that is "hazardous materials", then the "first responders" will be better protected, as will the public at large. 🍷

## Milwaukee Continues to Beat National Commercial Fire Safety Rate

One of the untold success stories of living and doing business in the City of Milwaukee is the successful fire safety rate with regards to Commercial property in Milwaukee. This includes retail stores, offices, factories, hotels, theaters, schools, and residential buildings with 3 or more units. Thanks in part to a multi-faceted approach to building standards in Milwaukee, the city has consistently beaten the national fire rate for the Commercial building group. From the first review by the Plan Exam section of the Development Center to approve the design, to the field inspections by DNS Construction inspectors during construction to verify the building process, to the annual fire inspections done by the commercial Code Enforcement section, each have a stake in claiming a part of that success. Come to Milwaukee if you are looking for a safe place to do business! 🍷

Commercial Fires Per 1000 Population 3 Year Average



\*NFPA and MFD data. DNS TNW V1 9/12/08



Booking #: 110309451 5/7/2004 Master ID: 0000348710

James P. Pfalz Booking Photo

## **“FEATURED” Graffiti Tagger Tagged with Jail Time and Fine**

by Sharon Blando, Anti-Graffiti Program Inspector

The case against James P. Pfalz goes back to February of 2003 when the first graffiti complaint was filed. According to the court records the case meandered through the court system waiting for the defendant to appear with counsel. Several “no appearances” are noted, one in which Pfalz attempted to enter the court building with a skate board. He forfeited \$200 in cash bonds and ultimately was sentenced to pay \$300 in restitution, a 45 day stayed jail sentence and 40 hours of community service.

Pfalz was previously convicted of Retail Theft in 2005. He served 64 days in the House of Correction for that.

Then in December of 2006 according to the complaint Pfalz was caught running from the scene of fresh graffiti underneath a bridge near 5th and Greenfield Ave. After a brief foot chase Milwaukee police found in his possession, empty spray cans, latex gloves with matching fresh paint and wet paint on the walls with the letters F.E.T.U.R. which an accomplice said means “FEATURE” as a graffiti tag. Graffiti damage to the Greenfield overpass also had the words “FETURZOKS” still dripping in fresh paint.

Judge Russel Stamper issued a sentence of 60 days in the House of Correction with no stay, a \$500 fine, \$150 in restitution to the City of Milwaukee and 50 hours of community service. Pfalz started serving his sentence May 4, 2009.

Hopefully this wakes some vandals up to the fact that they will be caught and that the consequences of their behavior will bring ruin to themselves and the City they live in. 🍀

**Landlord Training Update** – DNS has trained over 19,000 landlords representing 265,718 rental units and have held 384 sessions. Karin Long has worked with the Mayor's Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative and the lobbyist for the city to incorporate protections for tenants caught up in foreclosures as well as homeowners.

To attend a Landlord Training class and learn how to keep illegal behavior out of your property call the Landlord Training Registration Line at 414-286-2954 or go to [www.city.milwaukee.gov/landlordtraining](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/landlordtraining). 🍀



(L-R) Top down are Tanya Roeglin, Beatrice Kelly, Kimberly Lyons, Anthony Alston, Theresa Morales, Matt Jenrich, and Archie Blunt.

## **Meet the New DNS Staff**

*Since it has been a while since the last newsletter, we're looking back at those who have been added within the past year or who were missed since the last edition.-Editor*

**Tanya Roeglin** came to DNS with five years experience as a lead risk assessor with MHD lead program. Hobbies include camping, boating, gardening, socializing, and playing volleyball.

**Beatrice Kelly** joined the department in September of 2008 as a Code Enforcement inspector. She graduated from Excelsior Spring, Mo. High School and then attended the University of Missouri at Columbia with a BS degree in Environmental Design. She has worked as a Safety consultant on the Marquette interchange. Beatrice has a daughter in college and enjoys taking her dog to the dog park.

**Kimberly Lyons** joined the DNS Code Enforcement Program as an intern in July of 2008. She graduated from Pulaski High School and has an associate degree in Information Technology/ She's been a foster parent for 8 years and enjoys reading, movies and time with family and friends.

**Theresa Morales** is from Milwaukee, and lives in Bay View with her husband and two children. She has been with the City for a little over two years, first with the police department and now DNS. She recently graduated from Cardinal Stritch University with a degree in Business Management. She was in the Air Force for 10 years. Through the Community College of the Air Force she graduated with an Associate Degree in Restaurant, Hotel and Fitness Management. She enjoys reading books, dancing, working-out, traveling and spending time with her family.

**Anthony Alston** joined the Residential Code Enforcement section in August of 2008. Anthony was born in Milwaukee, he attended North Division High School, before gaining an associate's degree at MATC and a bachelor's degree at Lakeland College. Anthony loves art, music and social work.

**Matt Jenrich** became a Nuisance Control Officer in February of 2009. He attended Thomas More High School. He also graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a degree in history and Psychology. He enjoys golfing in his time off.

**Archie Blunt**, a Code Enforcement inspector as of October 2008, graduated from Custer High School. He then graduated from Columbia College in Chicago with a degree in Broadcast and Communication. He was a broadcast engineer for 14 years having worked at Channels 4 and 12. His hobbies include editing video and photography.

**David Campbell** transferred to an Environmental Hygienist position in the DNS Environmental Section at the beginning of 2009 from the Health Department. He was with the Health Department for

**See New DNS FOLKS on page 5**





Lake Tower new hires: (L-R) Dave Campbell, Joseph Nadolski, Luke Gorsline, and Roosevelt Stewart are all on the second floor of Lake Tower..

## New DNS FOLKS from page 4

13 years, first as a Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor then as an Environmental and Disease Control Specialist. In his spare time he enjoys camping, canoeing, bicycling and reading historical biographies.

**Joe Nadolski** is a temporary Nuisance Control Officer as of February 2009. Joe went to high school at Rufus King and then attended the University of Wisconsin ending with a B.S. degree in Natural Science. In the past four years he has worked for the University of Wisconsin, Clemson University in S.C, and the WI Dept. Natural Resources on various research projects. He currently lives in the Riverwest area. He enjoys playing music, brewing adult beverages (yes he can make beer!), and people watching in his district.

**Luke Gorsline** is a seasonal Nuisance Control Officer. Previously employed as a plumber with Martin Petersen Company. Luke's been married to his wife Andrea for 5 years. He has a BS in Conservation/Environmental Science from UW-Milwaukee. In his spare time he likes to go camping/hiking and practice Brazilian jiu-jitsu/mma.

**Roosevelt Stewart** is a seasonal Nuisance Control Officer. He is from Milwaukee and has a Biology degree. In his spare time, he enjoys running, swimming and spending time with his family.

**Jeffrey Thomas** is a DNS intern working in the commercial Code Enforcement Section. He graduated from Madison high school and attended UW-Whitewater. He worked in BOZA for three years and enjoys sports and traveling.

**Collette Adolfson** was hired as a Clerical in Electrical in Feb of 2008. She graduated from Northwestern High School in Maple, WI. She attended Indianhead Technical School in a secretarial science program. She was a school secretary for 18 year. Her time off is spent reading, gardening and fishing, not necessarily in that order.



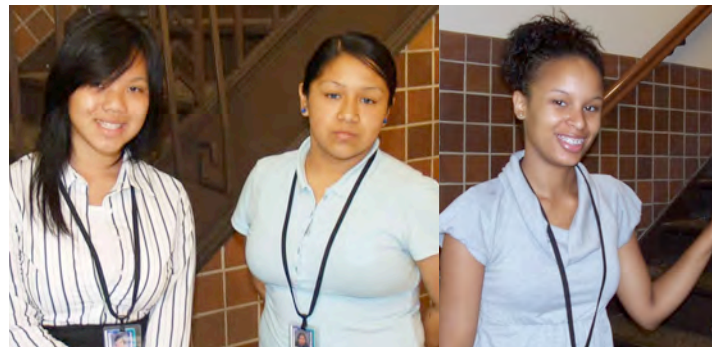
DNS ZMB new hires: (L-R) Intern Jeffrey Thomas, Electrical Clerical Collette Adolfson, and Electrical Inspector Mario Orlando



DNS Admin summer interns Stephanie Blasini, Dexter Martin, and Michael Garry.

**Mario Orlando** was hired as an Electrical Inspector in May of 2008.

DNS Admin summer interns include **Stephanie Blasini** who is a summer intern attending Milwaukee School of the Arts and is interested in dance. **Dexter Martin** graduated from Hamilton High School and plans to attend UW-Whitewater to pursue a career in computer engineering. **Michael Garry** is attending Riverside High School and is seeking a career in computers.



(L-R) Lake Tower summer interns Kabnpauj (Ka-Bo) Xiong, Marisela Espino and Aziza Lowe.

DNS summer interns at our Lake Tower officer include **Kabnpauj (ka-bo) Xiong** who attends Alexander Hamilton High School and is thinking of a career in English or Journalism. **Marisela Espino** will be a senior at St. Joan Antida and is interested in a public health career. **Aziza Lowe** attends the High School of the Arts and is a senior. She hopes to become a midwife.

**Jeffery Berry** left DNS to work as a Plan Examiner Specialist in DCD in July, 2006. Due to budget cuts in DCD, Jeff was able to be reinstated back to DNS as a Code Enforcement II Inspector in December 2008. Jeff brings back more than eleven and half years of inspector experience. Jeff was one of the last of the original 10 Code Enforcement Interns Building Inspection Department (now DNS) hired back in 1995.

**Gail Sylvan** was raised in Milwaukee and attended MATC. She enjoys attending Brewer games and travelling with her husband Scott who is a field engineer with the Bureau of Engineers. Their daughter is working and attending school in Chicago and their son is in the Air Force and is currently stationed in Japan.

**Matt Pittman** graduated from UWM with a degree in Environmental Geography in 2007. He also has a degree in graphic design. Matt has been working in the Environmental Section since May of 2008. He's originally from Arkansas and has lived in Milwaukee 14 years. He enjoys camping, traveling and playing the drums.

See New DNS Folks page 7



Part of the Milwaukee "Grime Fighting Team" – DNS Commissioner Art Dahlberg, Mayor Tom Barrett and a little helper join forces to kick off Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful's Borrow A Tool (BAT) program to aid residents in cleaning up their neighborhoods with borrowed tools and supplies.

## **Holy Grime Fighters! BAT Program Aids 'Litter Gitters'**

Mayor Tom Barrett kicked off the 'Spring into Action' program on March 16 at the Washington Park Public Library. New this year to the 'Spring Into Action' campaign is the **BAT** program which allows residents to **Borrow A Tool**, like a shovel, broom or rake, to help aid in the clean up process.

"Milwaukee belongs to all of us and it is our responsibility to keep it clean," Barrett said. "We cannot let litter afflict our City, so I'm asking everyone to do their part to help. With this program we're making it easy for residents to clean up their alleys and yards, which will have a great impact on the City."

Representatives from the Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful organization were on hand to explain the free resources residents can use.

The Mayor showcased some of the tools residents can use when he cleaned the surrounding area. The new BAT tools are available for check-out from Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful. All the resources are free and residents can register for the tools online at [KGMB.org](http://KGMB.org) or by calling 414-272-5462. 🌱

## **How Zoning Codes Can Make a Difference**

by Building Codes Enforcement Manager Ron Roberts

Many of us take for granted the everyday workings of the zoning code. As we enjoy the simple pleasures of urban life we never question how we got there or what keeps our urban metropolis so urban. Urbanism does not happen by accident, it takes careful, planning, regulation and enforcement.

In most municipalities, this type of planning is controlled by the zoning code. Zoning seeks to control land use in certain areas by synchronizing compatible land uses and segregating incompatible land uses. This is done by establishing Permitted and Special use categories and designing in a series of setbacks, screening, landscape buffers and/or isolating the zoning district from detrimental uses.

By doing this, we allow residential districts to retain their character, commercial districts to retain their character and industrial uses to do the same. Each district has a predetermined set of uses that are permitted as being compatible, a separate set of uses that would be considered special uses and a variety of uses that would not be permitted. Permitted uses are eligible for occupancy permit once they have been approved by the building inspector. Special uses are approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) on a case-by-case basis. Non-permitted (prohibited uses) may also be considered by the board and approved as a variance to the zoning code.

I'll never forget one experience I had while learning the zoning code. I was in a small Southern town, walking down the street to church. As I got closer to the church, I encountered

a fenced in area that abutted the sidewalk. To my surprise, suddenly several pigs ran to the fence thinking it was feeding time. In doing so, the pigs slung mud all over the sidewalk, me and my Sunday best. I was miserable. Just as I was prepared to go into church...at that moment I thought, they should move the church or they should move the pig stalls. It appears that the farm and the church were located on that street before zoning regulations came to that community. As I think about that experience, this has caused me to acknowledge how fortunate I am to live in a city where that type of incompatible use is effectively controlled by our zoning code.

The zoning code doesn't just regulate incompatible interior uses. It also regulates a number of outdoor uses such as parking, landscaping, screening, signage, fence height and design, setbacks, as well as building heights, dimensions and visibility. The zoning code also spells out requirements for downtown districts, special districts such as Parks, Institutional and Detailed Plan Development districts and a variety of Overlay districts.

One need only think about the negative impact caused by an alley mechanic on a thriving neighborhood to know that without these type of regulations and the ensuing enforcement, we would not be thriving for long. Zoning allows us to rely on the code to keep undesirable and incompatible uses out of our backyards and helps us retain the value of our property by prohibiting uses that would otherwise be detrimental to the character of a neighborhood.

If you are curious, please contact a zoning inspector for an opportunity to experience the world of zoning for yourself. 🌱



## How NOT to Rebuild A Porch- Things an Inspector Looks For



Time, gravity and decay are the primary forces bringing down porches in Milwaukee. When it's time to put up a new porch there is a right way and there is a wrong way. Whatever the reason, whether trying to cut corners to save a buck or pure ignorance about building techniques and structural loads, following the codes ensure that minimal safety standards will be followed.

The above left photo shows a floor joist screwed to a header board that is nailed to a support column. Once the nails let go there is no continuous path of support for the header board to bear on. Secondly, the use of conventional screws is not permitted as they would shear easily vs. a nail.

Finally, in the photo on the right, the joists are anchored via hangers into the face boards, which judging from the rot hole are likely unstable wood. The face boards would need to be removed so the header board could bear on a sistered joist anchored to the house. Thus the load is carried on the house joists (presuming they are bearing correctly on the foundation, inside of transferring the porch load to the sheathing boards.

Per the Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code: *Comm 21.02 Loads and materials. Every dwelling shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the requirements of this section.* (1) **DESIGN LOAD.** Every dwelling shall be designed and constructed to support the actual dead load, live loads and wind loads acting upon it without exceeding the allowable stresses of the material. The construction of buildings and structures shall result in a system that provides a complete load path capable of transferring all loads from point of origin through the load-resisting elements to the foundation.

The code requires an exterior porch to hold 40 lbs. per square foot. A typical 12 x 50 front porch is about 288 square feet required to carry 11,520 lb. load. With five nails into each header side, each nail would be required to hold 576 lbs. Do you think you could pry a board loose with a quater ton of pressure? 🐾



DNS Inspectors Angela Ferrill, Mike Demski and Jeffery Berry staff the DNS information table at the annual Milwaukee Juneteenth celebration held on Martin Luther King Dr. The team handed out information about building safety, smoke detectors and dealing with neighborhood improvement issues. All of DNS's brochures are available on the City's website at

<http://www.milwaukee.gov/dns/brochures>

### New DNS Folks from page 5

**Joseph Woodworth** worked 24 years as a sprinkler fitter and is now a sprinkler inspector for the Plumbing section since June of 2008. He spent 7 years in the Army as a medic and graduated from Messmer High School. He's married and enjoys playing baseball and raising his Labrador dogs.

**Nichole Dean** is working in the Environmental Nuisance Section since May of 2008.

**Jean Wendt** was hired as a Residential Code Enforcement Inspector in April of 2008.

A **Special DNS intern**, whom we cannot identify because they are conducting an on-going "Sting" of Landlords who continue to rent to four or more unrelated adults in an attempt to get more rent at the expense of college students. Suffice to say this intern is working in the Zoning and Condemnation Section since February 2008. Watch for the results of this individual in future Grapevine editions.

**Kevin Kautza** is a Plumbing Inspector for the Plumbing Section since January of 2008. He's a graduate of Pius High School and has worked for Bay View Plumbing and J.B.Schultz Plmb. He enjoys softball and collecting sports memorabilia.

**David Mattox** is a Cross Connection Inspector for DNS since January of 2008. He graduated from Milwaukee Tech and has worked for Don Macht plumbing. In his time away from work you'll find him hunting or fishing. 🐾



## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

by Commissioner Art Dahlberg

By the time this reaches your hands I will have been with DNS for 4 months. First I want to thank all of you for making me feel very welcome. Your kindness and patience has been greatly appreciated. Thank you for your willingness to listen as I ask a thousand questions so that I can understand how we do what we do.

I thought it may be helpful for us as an organization if I took a couple of paragraphs to tell you about my background and code enforcement philosophy.

First of all I was born and raised in the Midwest so coming to Milwaukee feels like coming back home again. When I graduated high school I went to work as a carpenter and then started doing heavy construction in an industrial facility. After a few years of being stubborn I had to admit my mom (the schoolteacher) was right and that broken knuckles got old after a while. I went back to school and got a degree in structural engineering. Along the way there was a terrible collapse of a skywalk in a hotel in my hometown. Seeing the awful consequences of that collapse made me decide to go into code enforcement. This is a decision that I have never regretted and after 24 years of various types of code enforcement I have arrived in Milwaukee.

Along the way I have been a building inspector, a fire protection inspector, a fire prevention inspector, a plan reviewer, a fire investigator, a member of collapse response teams, as well as being a building official/ fire official for three communities in Virginia. Through all of this I have come to appreciate the value of code enforcement and the positive impacts we can have on a community. Whether we individually do zoning, nuisance abatement, property recording, or a myriad of other duties we all have the potential to make our City better and to help numerous citizens along the way. I will say that each task we do is vitally important and I value each of our efforts equally.

My belief is that as an organization we are here to serve the citizens by both improving the safety of our buildings and also striving to improve the quality of life in all of our neighborhoods. Each of our functions is critical in this mission. Our citizens deserve to live and work in clean and safe communities. This can only happen through our hard work and through partnership with our citizens. We are highly dependent on them providing us information about what they hear and see in their neighborhoods. To make that work we must constantly work to ensure that they know we appreciate their information and concerns.

Thank you for all that you do and I look forward to working with you.

## New Commissioner from page 1

and management of programs at a local level that have improved the quality of life of the residents.

Other experience Mr. Dahlberg brings to the department is he has worked in communities hit by hurricanes and knows the FEMA protocols. He has had to rely on his own creativity when faced with unusual challenges. In one such case, living in the Washington D.C. area, his city was faced with plan review and inspection of a leased government facility which would have equalled an annual workload of his entire department. Commissioner Dahlberg's solution was to sub-contract the review and inspections, have the City workers supervise the 3rd party project staff in addition to their current workload and getting the developer to pay the added costs.

Commissioner Dahlberg said he looks forward to working with all parties to ensure that DNS programs are effective, efficient, and fair with the goal of improving the quality of life for residents, business owners, and property owners alike. 🍷



Commissioner Dahlberg takes questions from representatives of the Real Estate and Mortgage Insurance industry as the department "tested" its Abandoned Property in Foreclosure ordinance. By working with the community that would be most impacted by the requirements of the ordinance DNS hoped to make the process proceed as smoothly as possible. 🍷

## DNS How to reach us



Department of Neighborhood Services  
286-2268 841 N. Broadway RM 104

Have a contribution for the next edition of the  
DNS GRAPEVINE? Deadline NOVEMBER 15, 2009  
Email it to Todd Weiler, Editor: [tweiler@milwaukee.gov](mailto:tweiler@milwaukee.gov)